

**Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru | National Assembly for Wales
Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc ac Addysg | Children, Young People and
Education Committee
Grant gwella addysg: Plant Sipsiwn, Roma a Theithwyr, a phlant o
leiafrifoedd ethnig | Education Improvement Grant: Gypsy, Roma and
Traveller, and Minority Ethnic Children**

EIG 05

**Ymateb gan : Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Blaenau Gwent – Cyfarwyddiaeth
Addysg**

**Response from : Blaenau Gwent County Borough Council – Education
Directorate**

**How the new, amalgamated grant supports Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and
Minority Ethnic children, with specific reference to improving educational
outcomes;**

The Gwent Education Minority Ethnic Service (GEMS) is a support service that operates across Newport, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen and Monmouthshire and is funded entirely through the Education Improvement Grant.

The service is primarily staffed by teachers and teaching assistants who provide support to pupils within mainstream settings. Additionally, GEMS staff work alongside school based staff to build capacity to support pupils who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL).

GEMS have devised an EAL assessment document linked to the Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) and based upon the WG stages of language development. This document contains strategies for all professional to utilise with EAL learners.

EAL pupils in need of support are identified through liaison with pupil admissions, schools and the GEMS referral system. The outcomes of any such monitoring is shared via engagement with Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinators (ALNCOs)/nominated Teachers.

GEMS have adapted the WG five stage model that tracks EAL pupil's progress and attainment. The adaptation is called the Language Acquisition Records (LARs) are updated in a collaborative manner involving all stakeholders.

Close working with ALNCOs on a termly basis ensures that EAL learners are being monitored and assessed at regular intervals during the academic year.

End of Key Stage qualifications are analysed in conjunction with the Education Achievement Service (EAS) by ethnicity. This occurs by Local Authority (LA) across the 5 LAs of South East Wales Consortium (SEWC).

Data is monitored and analysed regarding the numbers of pupils on WG language stages within each LA. GEMS performance management is then linked to the GEMS Team plan which in turn is linked to the whole service plan. Performance management is then related to raising teacher performance and learner attainment in a measurable manner.

The structure of GEMS has been altered to best meet the needs of the EAL population across the region.

The Blaenau Gwent Traveller (GT) Service is largely funded through the Education Improvement Grant with the Local Authority providing an additional element.

The Service has two members of staff who provide support to pupils, families and schools. The overall purpose of the Service is to raise attendance, improve attainment levels, reduce exclusion and ensure that the pupils from the GT community have full access to the education curriculum and the best start in education.

The Service provides both academic support and pastoral support working with schools, parents and pupils to:

- Raise attainment
- Raise attendance
- Lower exclusions
- Improve the number of pupils that go on to further education.
- Improve the number of pupils that transition to Comprehensive school.
- Improve the number of pupils engaging with early years placements.
- Lower EHE numbers.
- Provide training on the GT Culture.
- Monitor and analyse data to support better outcomes for GT pupils.

The GT Service sits within the Education Inclusion Service and has effective links with other SEWC GT Services, as well as with GEMS, sharing good practice and supporting Service development.

There is close working with school ALNCOs to ensure that GT learners are being assessed at regular intervals during the academic year and progress is monitored in conjunction with the Education Achievement Service (EAS).

The effectiveness of other Welsh Government policies and strategies for supporting the education of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, and Minority Ethnic children;

“In Wales, the school improvement programme is driven through four regional consortia working on behalf of local authorities. From April 2014, the four

regional consortia will adopt and embody one national model for school improvement: the National Model for Regional Working, this provides local authority Ethnic Minority Achievement Services and Traveller Education Services with a geographical footprint on which to collaborate. As structures and processes for collaboration are developed, local authorities should consider how to build more capacity and achieve greater efficiency in the delivery of targeted services for better minority ethnic learner outcomes.”

(Minority Ethnic Achievement in Wales, Welsh Government- 2014)

The document above suggests how services should operate moving forward. In terms of the Minority Ethnic Achievement Grant (MEAG) element of the Education Improvement Grant (EIG), GEMS operates across the South East Wales Consortium (SEWC) so the work is undertaken in a fully integrated manner. With regards to the Gypsy Traveller (GT) provision across SEWC GEMS, Blaenau Gwent GT service and Torfaen GT service work closely to share good practice and information concerning the GT communities in the region. GEMS host the GT Forum (the only forum of its type in Wales) and the partner LAs sit on the forum.

In order to account for the work undertaken across the 5 LAs of South East Wales there are annual hosted services meeting involving chief education officers and cabinet members to review the use of the EIG.

Welsh Government has suggested the aforementioned model of working should be embedded across all parts of Wales but this does not appear to be the case in all regions at present.

Any key issues arising from amalgamating the other previously separate grants into the Education Improvement Grant.

From an Education Finance perspective the amalgamation of the separate grants has made budget monitoring simpler as well as reducing the time required to complete grant applications.

In addition, when grants were ring-fenced they were heavily linked to numbers in each Local Authority. Ring fencing therefore made for a potentially more vulnerable funding stream which in turn can lead to instability for those employed out of the various grants.

However, the removal of the separate ring-fenced grants means that funding is far more vulnerable to being utilised other than either ME/EAL Learners or GT Learners.

Specialisms are potentially eroded as individuals employed from previously ring-fenced funding are encouraged to broaden their remit and in some cases

take on work-streams they are unfamiliar with.